conflict within the framework of the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka.

Report on Tragedy with Indian Pilgrims at Mecca

327. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a detailed report over the twin tragedies stampede and a blaze on 2nd July at Mecca in which Indian Pilgrims were involved;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to provide necessary assistance to the victims and their families?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) On 1st July, 1990 fire brokeout in tented encampment for Haj pilgrims at Mina. Out of a total of 7000 tents destroyed, 1500 tents were those of Indian pilgrims. Fortunately all pilgrims were out to Arafat and none was hurt. The authorities quickly removed the debris and erected new tents before the return of pilgrims. It is learnt that most probably the cause of fire was an overturned kerosene stove or short circuit in the electricity system. However, no official version has been given by Saudi Government.

In the morning of 2nd July, 1990 there was a stampede in the Al Muaisem tunnel in Mina. The Saudi authonities have announced that 1426 pilgrims of various nationalities were killed; there has been no announcement as yet about the number of injured or their nationality-wise break up. According to official Saudi sources, 10 Indian nationals were killed, of whom 2 are unknown; 3 of the persons killed had gone for Haj under arrangements made by the Central Haj Commitee and other five Indian nationals had travelled on their own.

(c) All necessary assistance was promptly rendered to the Indian pilgrims whose tents caught fire. In the case of the tunnel tragedy, Govt. has been in contact with the State Haj Committees in order to render assistance.

Fire in the camp of Indian Haj Pilgrims at Mecca

328. CHOWDHRY HARI SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a devastating fire broke-out in the Indian tented encampment for Indian Haj Pilgrims at Mina in Mecca on July 2, 1990;

(b) if so, the cause of the fire;

(c) the name of the firm which supplied the above tents; and

(d) whether the Government of India have made any enquiry about the above fire accident?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL): (a) Yes Sir. On 1st July, 1990 fire broke out in the tented encampment for Haj pilgrims at Mina. Out of the 7000 tents destroyed, 1500 tents were those of Indian pilgrims. Fortunately none of our pilgrims was hurt.

(b) to (d) Government of India have made enquiries with the concerned Saudi authorities regarding the fire accident, who have made no official statement on the cause. It is understood that the tents were supplied by the South Asian Mossassa, an establishment under the Saudi Government, and that while the precise cause of the fire could not be ascertained it was most probably due to an overturned stove or short circuit in the electricity system.

Expiry of the lease of the residence of Indian High Commissioner in UK

329. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken steps to renew the lease of the residence of